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Canada Council seeks input on future directions

Ottawa, May 9, 2007 – The Canada Council for the Arts, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, is asking the arts community and the public to help guide the future directions of the national arts funding agency.

In developing its strategic plan for 2008-2011, the Canada Council will be holding consultations over the next two months with a wide range of service organizations representing various components of the arts community, as well as other provincial, territorial and regional arts funders and federal departments and agencies. The Council is also enabling other interested individuals and organizations to provide their input through its web site.

“Our objective is not to abandon well-respected programs that have gained the Council a reputation for effectiveness and responsiveness,” said Canada Council director Robert Sirman. “Rather, we seek to identify where our energies and resources would best be focused in the immediate future.”

“In the longer term, we want to make this already strong organization even stronger,” he said. “We want to put the arts in the centre of the lives of Canadians, improve the Council’s ability to support the continuing evolution of the arts, and deepen the relevance of the arts and the Council to Canadians.”

Mr. Sirman said the Canadian arts scene, as well as the demographics of Canada’s population, have changed significantly since the Canada Council was created by Parliament in 1957.

“New technologies, a more diverse population and continuous growth in the number of artists and arts organizations across Canada are just some of the developments that are having an impact on the Council’s programs and priorities,” Mr. Sirman said. “We want the arts community and the public to let us know what the Council could be doing better to improve its support of the arts for the benefit of all Canadians.”

In order to enable individual artists and interested Canadians to participate in the process, a discussion paper and contact information will be posted on the Canada Council’s web site as of May 14.

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The Council's strategic plan will be developed over the summer and early fall, and will be reviewed by the board of the Canada Council during its 50th anniversary meeting in Montreal in October 2007. Once approved by the board, it will be released to the public and posted on the Council's web site.

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